

AN IMPROVED MAGNETIC CONSTRUCTION TOY

Field of the Invention

This invention relates to a magnetic construction toy for building geometrical structures utilizing spherical magnetizable bodies and construction members having a central hub and a multiplicity of connecting members extending radially from the hub cantileverly where each connecting member's free end contains a permanent magnet.

Background of the Invention

Magnetic toy construction elements which, when assembled with other construction elements to build various structures that are held together magnetically to form a geometrical structure, typically consist of connecting arms containing magnets at the extremities of the arm. The connecting arms generally engage a spherical magnetizable member which permits the connecting arm to magnetically couple with a magnetizable body to form the building blocks for the geometrical construction. In building a three dimensional construction utilizing toy construction elements, it is desirable to have construction elements that have a simple design yet are strong and durable in construction and challenge the builder's imagination in the same way as a puzzle to create unusual geometrical shapes. Construction elements are disclosed in the prior art, however, elements having a multiplicity of connecting arms extending integrally from a common hub that are spaced in equal angular increments, radially equidistant and in the same plane, provide a construction member that allows the toy to consist of fewer parts, less expensive to produce, yet providing a creative challenge to create a geometrical sculpture.

It is therefore desirable to have construction elements which are easily assembled into a geometrical sculpture that will be sufficiently rigid and retain its structural integrity after being assembled. An object of this invention is to provide a magnetic construction toy having construction elements that have structural strength and simplicity of design so as to reduce the number of elements required to create a sculpture and thus provide a construction toy capable of being uniquely coupled in imaginative ways to create a geometric sculpture.

1 Summary of the Invention

2 There is, therefore, provided according to the present invention, a magnetic construction
3 toy having construction elements for building geometric sculptures where each construction
4 element contains a multiplicity of connecting arms extending radially from a hub where the
5 connecting arms are disposed at equal angular intervals; the free end of each connecting arm
6 contains a permanent magnet for magnetically coupling with a magnetizable body which in turn
7 couples with another construction element, magnetically, in construction of the geometrical
8 sculpture.

9 The present invention is directed to an improved construction element for use in a
10 geometric construction toy that consists of, in the preferred embodiment, a multiplicity of
11 connecting arms having a first end and a second portion and an axis of symmetry extending
12 between the first end and second portion. A permanent magnet is carried within each connecting
13 arm adjacent the first end of the arm while the second portion of the connecting member is
14 integrally associated with the hub portion; each of the axes of symmetry of the connecting
15 members lies in the same plane and are angularly displaced an equal number of degrees from
16 each other. Each axis of symmetry extends radially from the geometrical center of the hub; the
17 connecting arm associated with an axis of symmetry has a peripheral surface that is radially
18 symmetric to the axis of symmetry in planes that are orthogonal to the axis of symmetry
19 intermediate the first end and the second portion. The peripheral surface may also be a surface
20 of revolution with respect to the axis of symmetry. A magnetizable body capable of
21 magnetically coupling with the first end of a connecting arm of the construction member permits
22 a multiplicity of connecting arms from other construction members to magnetically couple with
23 the magnetizable body. Thus, by utilizing a multiplicity of magnetizable bodies the player can
24 create different types of geometrical sculptures.

25 In one embodiment of the invention, the construction member has four connecting arms,
26 each arm having a varying cylindrical cross-sectional shape that is radially symmetrical to the
27 axis of symmetry extending intermediate the first end and second portion of the connecting
28 member. Each axis of symmetry is in the same plane and angularly displaced ninety degrees
29 from an adjoining axis of symmetry. The second portions of the connecting arms are integrally
30 carried by the hub portion such that the axis of symmetry extends radially from the geometrical

1 center of the hub. A permanent magnet is carried within each connecting arm adjacent the first
2 end, where each first end is equidistant from the geometrical center of the hub portion. A
3 magnetizable member preferably having a spherical shape, may couple with a first end of a
4 connecting arm in the creation of a geometrical sculpture. Each connecting arm has a peripheral
5 surface that is radially symmetrical to the axis of symmetry in planes orthogonal to the axis of
6 symmetry intermediate the first end and second portion of the connecting arm. The peripheral
7 surface may be a surface of revolution with respect to the axis of symmetry intermediate the first
8 end and second portion of the connecting arm.

9 In yet another embodiment of the invention, the construction member has three
10 connecting arms, each arm having a cylindrical shape that is radially symmetrical to the axis of
11 symmetry extending intermediate the first end and second portion of the connecting member.
12 Each axis of symmetry is in the same plane and angularly displaced one hundred twenty degrees
13 from an adjoining axis of symmetry. The connecting arms are integrally carried by the hub
14 portion at the second portion and the connecting arm is cantilevered with the first end
15 unsupported. The axis of symmetry extends radially from the hub. Each connecting arm has a
16 peripheral surface that is radially symmetrical to the axis of symmetry in planes orthogonal to the
17 axis of symmetry intermediate the first end and second portion of the connecting arm. The
18 peripheral surface may be a surface of revolution with respect to the axis of symmetry
19 intermediate the first end and second portion of the connecting arm. A permanent magnet is
20 carried within each connecting arm adjacent to the first end opposite from the hub, where each
21 first end is equidistant from the geometric center of the hub. A magnetizable member preferably
22 having a spherical shape, may couple with a multiplicity of connecting first ends of connecting
23 arms in the creation of a geometrical sculpture.

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1 Brief Description of the Drawings

2 These and other features and advantages will become appreciated as the same become
3 better understood with reference to the following specification, claims and drawings wherein:

4 FIG. 1 is a top view of a construction member having four connecting arms extending
5 from a hub portion of the member where each connecting arm has an axis of symmetry lying in
6 the same plane.

7 FIG. 2 is a cross sectional view along the line 2-2 as shown in Fig. 1.

8 FIG. 3 is a cross sectional view along the line 3-3 as shown in Fig. 1.

9 FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a geometrical sculpture constructed with construction
10 members shown in Figs. 1, 2 and 3 forming the geometrical sculpture through magnetic coupling
11 with a magnetizable body.

12 FIG. 5 is a top view of a construction member of an embodiment of this invention having
13 three connecting arms, each arm having a symmetrical axis where the axes are angularly spaced
14 one hundred twenty degrees and in the same plane.

15 FIG. 6 is a cross sectional view taken along the line 6-6 shown in Fig. 5.

16 FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a geometrical sculpture constructed with construction
17 members shown in Figs. 5 and 6 forming the geometrical sculpture through magnetic coupling
18 with a magnetizable body.

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¹ Detailed Description

² FIG. 1 is a top view of the preferred embodiment of this invention. Construction member
³ **1** is composed of a multiplicity of connecting arms **2** where each connecting arm **2** has an axis of
⁴ symmetry **3**, a first end **4**, and a second portion **5** that is integral with hub portion **6**. Hub portion
⁵ **6** has a geometrical center that is the center of central opening **7**. Central opening **7** extends
⁶ through hub portion **6** as can more clearly be seen in **2**.

⁷ Referring to Fig. 2 which is a cross section of the construction member taken along line
⁸ 2-2 of Fig. 1, it can be seen that a permanent magnet **8** is captively held within first end **4** of the
⁹ connecting arm. Preferably the construction member is made of a plastic material for cost
¹⁰ effectiveness and ease of manufacture. Each connecting arm has an axis of symmetry **3**
¹¹ extending from the geometrical center of the central opening and has a peripheral surface that is
¹² symmetrical about its axis of symmetry **3** in any plane orthogonal to the symmetrical axis
¹³ intermediate the first end **4** and second portion **5**. In Fig. 2, it can be seen that at the first end **4**
¹⁴ of the connecting arm, the connecting arm has an axially extending taper **9** that terminates at first
¹⁵ end **4**. An opening **11** in the first end **4** of connecting arm **2** forms a chamber that permits the
¹⁶ permanent magnet **8** to be inserted within the first end of the connecting member so that the
¹⁷ permanent magnet can be captively carried by the connecting arm at its first end. The peripheral
¹⁸ surface of the connecting arm intermediate the first end and second portion may be a surface of
¹⁹ revolution with respect to the axis of symmetry. The axes of symmetry are in the same plane and
²⁰ in the preferred embodiment are angular spaced ninety (ninety degrees) degrees from each other.

²¹ In Fig. 4, a geometrical sculpture **10** is illustrated that consists of a multiplicity of
²² construction members **1** which couple magnetically to magnetizable body **12**. Although it is
²³ preferred that the first end **4** of connecting arm **2** contain a permanent magnet **8**, in other
²⁴ embodiments, rather than a permanent magnet, a magnetizable material may be utilized that
²⁵ couples to a magnetic body such as the spherical body that is shown in Fig. 4.

²⁶ Another embodiment of this invention is illustrated in Figs. 5, 6 and 7. Fig. 5 illustrates a
²⁷ construction member **1'** having three connecting arms where each connecting arm has a
²⁸ peripheral surface that is symmetrical to symmetrical axis **3'** in any plane orthogonal to
²⁹ symmetrical axis intermediate the first end **4'** and second portion **5'**; second portion **5'** is
³⁰ integrally embodied in hub portion **6'**. Each connecting arm **2'** has an axis of symmetry **3'** and

1 each axis of symmetry is angularly displaced from an adjoining axis of symmetry by an angle of
2 one hundred twenty degrees degrees. As above described in the embodiment containing four
3 connecting arms, the embodiment of Figs. 5, 6 and 7 of the construction member contains three
4 axes of symmetry that are in the same plane and have a point of intersection at the geometrical
5 center of hub portion 6'. By referring to Fig. 6, which is a cross section taken along the line 6-6
6 of Fig. 5, it can be seen that permanent magnet 8' is captively carried at first end 4' and is
7 insertable into a chamber at first end 4' through opening 11'. As in the embodiment shown in
8 Figs. 1, 2, 3 and 4, the construction member as shown in Fig. 6 is preferably made of a plastic
9 material for lightweight construction, and ease of manufacture. Likewise, the peripheral surface
10 intermediate first end 4' and second portion 5' may be a surface of revolutions with respect to
11 the axis of symmetry.

12 By referring to Fig. 7, a geometrical sculpture can be seen that is constructed of a
13 multiplicity of construction members 1'. The permanent magnet 8' captively held in the first end
14 of connecting arm 2' magnetically couples with magnetizable body 12' to permit the
15 construction of geometrical sculpture 10'. Although not shown in this embodiment,
16 magnetizable body 12' may be a permanent magnet while a magnetizable body may be utilized
17 in first end 4' to permit the coupling of the connecting arm with the permanent magnet to form a
18 geometrical sculpture.

19 While I have shown and described embodiments of a construction member for a magnetic
20 construction toy, it is to be understood that the invention is subject to many modifications
21 without departing from the scope and spirit of the claims as recited herein.
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